

# Civil War Illustrative Journalism: Traveling Artist Alexander Simplot

**Subject:** Social Studies, Arts/Humanities, and Language Arts

**Duration:** 45 minutes

**Location:** Classroom, Fort Donelson NB

**Key Vocabulary:** illustrated journalism, military engagement, bastion, Rebel, dysentery, Bohemian Brigade.

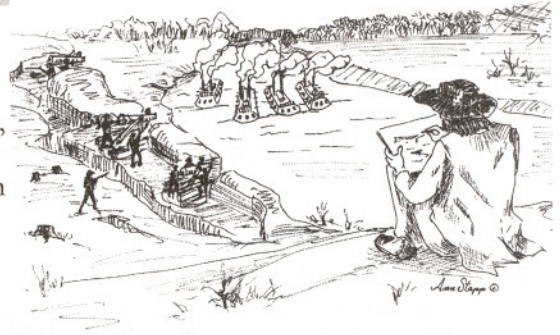
**Related Activities:** Review artwork of Fort Henry and Donelson battles, generals, ironclads and historical sites

**Standards:**

**National: S.S. Strand 1: Culture**

**State: Kentucky – S.S. 2.20, A.H. 2.23, 2.24, and L.A. 1.2,1.11**

**Tennessee – S.S. 5.03, L.A. 1.01**



**Objectives.** The students will be able to: a) analyze their own and other artists' products and performances using accepted standards, b) gain knowledge of works of Civil War art in order to interpret historical events.

**Method.** The students will research the purpose of illustrated journalism in America in the 1860's and discuss various artists and the news media that existed during this era.

**Background.** In 1861 illustrated journalism had come into its own in America. Traveling artists were needed to supply the market for news illustrations. One of the first to answer President Lincoln's call for troops was the Governor's Grays, a Dubuque, Iowa home company of some sixty men commanded by Captain Franc Herron. Artist Alexander Simplot drew an illustration of the April 22, 1861 troop departure and submitted it to *Harper's Weekly*. He was immediately hired as a special artist.

## Materials

- Internet access
- Examples of Civil War sketches
- Pictures of artists
- Civil War journals i.e., *Harper's Weekly*

## Suggested Procedure

1. Introduce students to the location and related history of the battles of Fort Donelson and Fort Henry.
2. Point out the location of these forts on a map.
3. Review types of media available during the 1860's and compare and contrast that to today.
4. Discuss the importance of illustrated journalism during early American history.
5. Research key examples of journalism and during the Civil War. i.e. *Harper's Weekly*, Simplot Sketches, Matthew Brady photography.
6. Brainstorm how illustrated journalism is vital in preserving historic events and cite examples from the Civil War era and throughout modern times.
7. Visit Fort Donelson and students view sketches of various park sites or illustrations key people or events which occurred during the Civil War battles. Students can then write news articles about the battles at Forts Henry and Donelson.

## Evaluation

Discuss with students the effects of technology on journals and war correspondence throughout American history. Cite examples of reporting methods from all American Wars.

## Extension

Using the *National Park System Map and Guide* provide by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior (March 1, 1998) have students locate the sites of Civil War battles and note how illustrative artists and journalists of the Civil War covered a vast area. Have students locate the national parks closest and the longest distance from their school.